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Getting His Man Laurie York Erskine and Renfrew of the Mounted By David Kirk Vaughan



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Getting His Man Laurie York Erskine and Renfrew of the Mounted

By David Kirk Vaughan

Laurie York Erskine (1894-1876) was a prolific writer of adventure stories, most of which were published in a twenty-year period from 1921 to 1941, and most of which were set in the American West or Canadian Northwest. According to the National Union Catalogue, Erskine wrote twenty books or book-length collections of stories, of which half were for younger readers. The best-known of his books for younger readers are those in the Renfrew of the Mounted series, published from 1922 to 1941. According to the Reader's Guide, Erskine had stories published in twenty-five issues of periodicals from 1927 through 1936; the largest number of these stories appeared in Collier's Magazine. But that list does not include the stories he published in American Boy magazine, in which nearly all (as far as I can determine) of his Renfrew stories appeared before they were issued in book form. I have no doubt that he must have written an equally large (twenty-five or so) number of stories that were not collected or recorded; I have found at least one story in American Boy (not a Renfrew story) that was not reprinted or noted anywhere else. Erskine also wrote a one-act play, "Three Cans of Beans," which was published in American Boy and reprinted in Short Plays for Modern Players (ed. Hughes). The Reader's Guide also notes that Erskine had three pieces published in the Reader's Digest in 1950 and 1951, and that he had one final story published in the Saturday Evening Post in October of 1958.

A Brief Biographical Overview

As is often the case with juvenile series writers of this period, little information about Laurie York Erskine is available in standard reference volumes. My second-hand copy of Erskine's "Valley of the Wolves," published in 1948, includes a short dust-jacket biography written in a wry style that could only have been that of Erskine himself:

Laurie York Erskine is the son of Wallace Erskine, an English actor. He was born in England, June 23rd, 1894, thus being the same age to the day as the Duke of Windsor. At the age of 7 he came to New York City, being educated in the New York Public Schools and the Choir School of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Desiring to write, but reluctant to starve in an attic, he endeavored to solve a persistent economic problem in the successive roles of lawyer's clerk, shipping clerk, actor (he was Alaric in "Peg o' My Heart"), wanderer in the West, wanderer in the Southwest, wanderer in the North and Northwest, bond salesman, warrior and again as bond salesman. During the war (WW I) he flew with

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the scouts and the bombers of the British Royal Flying Corps.

If this description of his past is chronologically accurate, Erskine must have had a very active life before his service in WW I; his age at the beginning of the war would have been twenty, so it is not unlikely that he should have traveled a great deal in the years before the war. He came to America in 1901—at the age of seven—when his father, who was an actor, brought a British theatrical company for a tour. Later Erskine was a member of a stage company himself, traveling through the American West before the war. Although he was a pilot in World War I, he never learned to drive a car. After the war, he worked as a writer for the Battle Creek Moon Journal and the Detroit News (possibly where he became associated with the Sprague Company, publishers of American Boy).

The self-mocking account of his life given previously fails to mention the fact that he was also one of the founders of the Solebury School, an innovative private boys' school begun in New Hope, Pennsylvania, in 1925.

The Solebury School

According to Robert W. "Pop" Shaw, one of the founders of the Solebury School and author of "Solebury School: The First Fifty Years (1925-1975)" (Privately printed, 1977), the idea for the Solebury School originated in 1924 in a summer camp in New Hampshire, when Shaw, Erskine, Julian Lathrop, and Arthur "Doc" Washburn, the four first founders of the school, began to discuss the possibility of establishing a school in which learning might not be thwarted by the usual overly mechanized structure. Erskine's philosophy is best indicated by this passage, given in Erskine's own words:

This [desire to create a new school] was undoubtedly because I had seen so many highly promising young men slaughtered in a world war [WW I] brought about by the incredible stupidity of the highly educated men who led the nations of the world, and then seen those same leaders forge a treaty that ignored every opportunity for lasting peace, that I felt determined to do everything I could to help as many boys as I could to learn and understand the values that could make for war or peace in the world. This, it seemed to me then and does seem to me now, can only be achieved by an education which provides the young with an ample supply of knowledge and at the same time frees their minds to formulate for themselves how this knowledge may be used to reach the desired evaluations. This they cannot achieve by unquestioningly accepting and blindly adopting the opinions [opinions?] of school teachers or professors, whose functions should be rather to stimulate and guide the student's thoughts than to impose their own ideas upon him. (12)

In order to learn more about the then-current state of affairs in American education, Erskine says, he "went around to a number of preparatory schools to tell the boys stories of the Canadian North and the Mounted Police" (12)

The educational picture that he found was "not a pretty one":

What was called education was quite rigidly controlled by the College Boards and consisted almost completely of cramming the students with facts and memorabilia about five or six arbitrarily-selected sectors of accumulated knowledge, to the purpose that on a certain date they would be able to answer in a prescribed time-limit from ten to twenty out of a possible few hundred questions about them. This made education a decidedly depressing and boring experience for all students who were not temperamentally inclined to learn by rote, and frustrated really talented teachers who would have liked to excite in their students a lively

and comprehensive interest in their subjects beyond the limitations of the prescribed and often poorly written textbooks. As a result of this I found most of the students miserably unhappy in their work, many of them hating school as a prisoner hates jail, and looking upon most of their teachers as unfair taskmasters and their natural enemies.(12-3)

In contrast to the formal schooling environment, Erskine found in his personal experience that life in the outdoors often promoted in his young charges a healthy interest in learning:

Around innumerable campfires and on unnumbered hikes they have eagerly drawn from me information and explanation about every subject they were studying at school, and have avidly reached for and enjoyed all I could tell them of history, biography, literature, poetry, nature study—in short, all the world of knowledge that good conversation and friendly discussion could open to them. Discussion seemed to be the key.(13)

Erskine's delight in sharing the outdoor life with a crew of boys is evident in his fond recollection of camping trips he shared with them:

It was that great love I indulged for the wilderness that took me constantly out upon camping trips with boys, who are the best of companions in the wilds. I can remember so many of them: from those canoe trips and hikes I took with you (Shaw) and the boys of Nutley (New Jersey) (where this writer grew up), through trips in wild Canada with the sons of trappers and woodsmen, camping on Michigan lakes with the young ruffians of Cadillac, Michigan—sons of lumberjacks and timber barons, mostly—and summer and winter hikes (over the snow on skis) with the more civilized youngsters of Battle Creek—all sorts and kinds and conditions of boys, from juvenile delinquents to the ambitious sons of successful business men.(13)

Erskine supported the development of the Solebury School wholeheartedly; in fact if it hadn't been for his unexpected good luck in 1923, the school might not have been formed at all. According to Erskine,

It would all have come to nothing if I had not that winter sold the movie rights of a magazine serial I had written, for \$20,000. With what I afterward discovered was the usual blithe optimism of fictioneers, I thereupon found no reason why I should not take over a pre-Revolutionary Quaker farm, people it with a congenial group of gifted teachers and a houseful of eager students, and finance it by writing and selling a magazine serial and the motion picture rights to it at least once a year.

Of course, as you know, it was fifteen years before I had another such windfall, but then, in 1923 (I think it was) this hideous reality was veiled behind the blazing promise of the moment. As a historian, you might mark that without that blazing promise there would be no Solebury School today.(15)

Although Erskine participated on an intermittent basis in the instruction at the school, his primary contribution was financial, in that he counted on the sale of his books and stories to help provide some income for the school staff. Chief among the writings which made the continued success of the school possible were the books of the Renfrew series.

But the Renfrew books were not merely the means by which Erskine could help to meet his commitment to the support of the school; they became, very soon after the establishment of the school, vehicles through which Erskine could transmit to his youthful readers the educational ideals and precepts in which he so strongly believed. They became, in a way, the best kind of teaching he could give, to the students of Solebury School, and to young

readers everywhere. While the Renfrew books always provided good adventure stories, they also provided their readers with important moral and ethical values.

The Renfrew Series

Laurie York Erskine's Renfrew of the Mounted series began in 1922, with the publication of Renfrew of the Royal Mounted. This initial volume contained the Renfrew stories that had appeared in American Boy's 1921 issues. The second volume, Renfrew Rides Again, appeared in 1927, and consisted of stories published in American Boy in 1926 and 1927, the two years immediately following the founding of the Solebury School. Subsequent Renfrew volumes included Renfrew Rides the Sky (1928), Renfrew Rides North (1931), Renfrew's Long Trail (1933), Renfrew Rides the Range (1935), Renfrew in the Valley of the Vanished Men (1936), and Renfrew Flies Again (1941). All books were published initially by Appleton-Century, then republished by Grosset and Dunlap.

Although there were eight books in which the name Renfrew appears in the title, there is in fact at least one other book in which Renfrew appears, *One Man Came Back*, published in 1939. In contrast to the other Renfrew volumes, which consist of collections of short stories, *One Man Came Back* is a full book-length novel (although it too appeared in the pages of American Boy). Perhaps Erskine chose to delete Renfrew's name from the title because it was structurally unlike the other books in the series. Another relatively major difference is that much of the action focuses on a young boy rather than on Renfrew.

Some accounts indicate that Erskine wrote as many as twelve Renfrew books, but I do not see how this can be true, unless all three of the Erskine books that I have not been able to find (*The Boy Who Went* (1923), *Fine Fellows* (1929), and *Comrades of the Clouds* (1930) feature Renfrew in some fashion. None of his other eight published books and one play are about Renfrew, although other members of the Mounted Police do appear in them. Including *One Man Came Back*, then, I count nine Renfrew titles. I have a sense that Renfrew appears in *Comrades of the Clouds*; if so, there could be ten Renfrew books.

Throughout the eight "regular" Renfrew books, the character of Renfrew remains consistent and appealing: calm, quiet, perceptive, and humane. But although his character remains the same, certain changes in Renfrew's status and outlook are evident throughout the eight books. In the first volume in the series, *Renfrew of the Royal Mounted*, Renfrew is no longer a member of the Mounted; he is living in the town of Walney (perhaps intended to represent Nutley, N. J.), where he is living with his mother earning a living writing adventure stories about the Canadian Northwest. A group of enthusiastic 14-year-olds successfully persuades him to tell them his stories of his earlier days in the RCMP, which he does while they visit his home, and, in the second half of the book, while they participate in a camping trip which he supervises. In this volume we learn that Renfrew was a member of the RCMP in the years before WW I (22). Each story in the book is framed by the conversations and activities of the youngsters as they appeal to Renfrew to tell them a story. This unique narrative structure gives the book a personal tone not found in the later volumes.

In the next two volumes, *Renfrew Rides Again* and *Renfrew Rides the Sky*, Renfrew continues to recall stories from his earlier days, but this information is provided in brief prefaces, and there are no boys present to hear the stories. The third volume (*Renfrew Rides the Sky*) is very much unlike

the other Renfrew books in that it is not at all about RCMP adventures, but is instead a collection of tales about Renfrew's experiences in the RFC (Royal Flying Corps) in World War I. These tales are pretty clearly based on Erskine's wartime flying experiences, and have at times an irony and even bitterness about them that elevate them above the level of juvenile series writing. To my mind, *Renfrew Rides the Sky* is one of the finest works of fiction about the war in the air.

In the fourth Renfrew book, *Renfrew Rides North*, the episodes are characterized as happening in the present. In the opening story, Renfrew is leading a group of youths (perhaps the same youths of the original volume) on a camping trip in the Canadian Northwest, where he becomes quickly involved with helping the Mounted Police capture a murderer. Soon Renfrew "rejoins the Force," shipping his charges back to the United States. "It was inevitable," the narrator says (57). Although the volume ends with Renfrew expressing a desire to leave the Force (295), he never does; he is there to stay. Throughout the remainder of the series Renfrew is on active duty in the RCMP, moving up in rank from Corporal to Sergeant to Inspector. Perhaps because he enjoyed recalling his flying experiences in his previous volume, Renfrew finds an opportunity to fly a plane in this volume as well.

The fifth volume, *Renfrew's Long Trail*, shows Erskine at his best, as Renfrew moves across a large geographical area, the entire Canadian Northwest; and his adventures are varied and always interesting. In one episode, for instance, Renfrew's journey to prevent a crime is of secondary importance to his ability to survive an excessively severe snow storm. The sixth volume, *Renfrew Rides the Range*, continues in the same vein.

A comment on the dust jacket of the seventh volume, *Renfrew in the Valley of Vanished Men*, indicates that Renfrew had found his way onto the airways by the time of its publication. The obituary notice for Erskine that appeared in the *New York Times* stated that the radio series had begun in 1936, which was "written by Mr. Erskine and broadcast over WABC Columbia network." The *Times* notice also stated that the first Renfrew movie was made in 1937 by Grand National Pictures, and featured James Newill in the title role. In 1953 Renfrew was turned into a television series on Channel 2 in New York City, again featuring Newill in the title role.

In the eighth and final "regular" volume, *Renfrew Flies Again*, the airplane is, as the title indicates, a major factor in the action of all the stories. In this instance, however, Renfrew is a passenger, not a pilot, but his previous aeronautical experience is often relevant to the outcome of the stories. There is no evidence, in the final volume of the series, that Renfrew knew he was participating in his final adventures, but that turned out to be the case. For, late in the year in which the book first appeared, the Japanese Navy attacked Pearl Harbor. With the onset of WW II, Laurie York Erskine devoted his literary talents to the Army, and Served in Hawaii, working as a writer for a publication entitled "Fighting Facts." Renfrew—in fictional form, at least—became a casualty of the war.

It is instructive to note that seven of the eight Renfrew books were written after the official start of the Solebury School in the fall of 1925, and that five of his seven adult novels were written by 1926. Once Erskine became involved with the development of the Solebury School, his literary efforts were increasingly turned towards providing for younger readers the kind of natural education adventure which so strongly characterize the Renfrew books. Whereas the first Renfrew book was dedicated to his mother, the fourth Renfrew book was dedicated to several boys of the Solebury School, and his *After*

School: A Story of Patriotism (1927) was dedicated to two of the first boys to attend the school. The story told in After School also illustrates exactly the kind of learning situation he described in his comment about how boys become interested in learning when they are out of school—"after school." And all Renfrew books published after 1925 often contain references to the natural curiosity of boys and of their innate desire for learning.

The books in the Renfrew series are, to my mind, among the best of any juvenile series books ever published. They are characterized by a crisp, economical style and well-constructed plots. The character of Renfrew is nicely developed; Renfrew is physically fit and mentally alert, but he is not above making an occasional mistake, and he is not always the central figure in the story. Often one or two other individuals, usually teen-age boys, or young men just joining the RCMP, occupy the focus of the story line. Whether Renfrew is the central character or the watcher of the progress of the other characters in the story, there is always a learning process taking place from which the other characters benefit directly. Renfrew consistently functions very much like a teacher, coaching his apprentices in a restrained but positive manner, then withdrawing at an appropriate moment so that the apprentices can meet some physical and moral challenge towards which the story has been working. Although Renfrew never forgets that there is a criminal to be apprehended or a mystery to be solved, his desire to "get his man" is usually secondary to his interest in building the character of his younger assistants in the story. I would like to examine a representative Renfrew story briefly to show how Erskine executes this approach.

Although an appropriate example could be selected from any one of the Renfrew books, the story I have chosen to illustrate my point comes from one of my favorite volumes, Renfrew's Long Trail. In this volume Renfrew travels throughout the provinces of the Canadian northwest—Alberta, British Columbia, the North West Territories—in the course of his involvement in fourteen different episodes. His travels cover such a large territory that the end papers of the book contain a map for the reader to track Renfrew's progress. The episodes of my example takes place in the vicinity of Prince Rupert, B. C., and is found in chapters 15 to 19 of the book.

The story opens as Renfrew encounters Constable Kingdon in the Prince Rupert police barracks. Renfrew learns that Kingdon was demoted from the rank of Sergeant because he allowed a criminal to escape from his custody. Kingdon tells Renfrew that he has information about the location of the escaped man because he suspects that a youth who has been working on the escaped man's farm is secretly supplying the man with food and equipment. Kingdon expects to obtain information about the location of the escaped man from the youth one way or another. If the youth—Matthew Brian—won't provide the information willingly, Kingdon indicates that he will resort to other methods if necessary to obtain the information. Kingdon is upset because his negligence has cost him his stripe, and he fully intends to regain his former rank.

Renfrew is concerned because he fears that Kingdon, in his strong desire to regain his rank, may overstep the bounds of his legal and moral authority by doing harm to the boy. Renfrew intuitively likes both Kingdon and the boy, whom he meets casually at the post office one morning; Renfrew offers to help Kingdon, but Kingdon is determined to complete the case successfully by himself. Concerned about how Kingdon will handle the case, Renfrew follows Kingdon out to the farm where the boy works and arrives as Kingdon begins to beat the information out of the boy. Kingdon is described as stand-

ing in "the shameful confusion of a good man caught red-handed in an unworthy deed." (76)

Renfrew's arrival brings Kingdon to his senses, and he realizes that he has discredited himself and the uniform. As they ride away from the farm, Kingdon tells Renfrew that he is "leaving the Force."

"Better get your man first," said Renfrew quietly.

"I've ruined the only chance I had."

"No." Renfrew was holding out something in the moonlight. "Here's your information," he said. "Clear as day." (77-8)

Renfrew gives Kingdon some charred pieces of a message he found in the boy's house, and then rides off to let Kingdon interpret the message (which Renfrew had already deciphered) and to act on the information it provides.

Renfrew then rides to a deserted wharf where he knows the wanted man intends to board a boat and make his escape. He overhears the boy, Matt, tell the fugitive that he has changed his mind and wants to join forces with him because he now wants to "square things up with these cops" (80). Renfrew hopes that Kingdon will arrive in time to interrupt their escape, but when it appears that Kingdon has not deciphered the message, he decides he must act. When Renfrew steps forward, Matt, angry because of the abuse he received at the hands of the Mounties earlier that day, interferes with Renfrew's attempt to make an arrest. Renfrew, fearing his actions could bring harm to the boy, allows himself to be disarmed. Then Kingdon arrives, having successfully deciphered the message:

And then a strange thing happened. A voice which rang with a magnificent authority sounded from the beach. "Drop those guns!" it cried. "You're under arrest!" They turned, . . . in time to see Kingdon, dominant and splendid in his brilliant regimentals, striding toward them down the wharf . . . (82-3)

In the brief scuffle which follows, Matt, the boy, having realized the escapee intends to murder Renfrew and Kingdon, assists the efforts of the Mounties in subduing the members of the gang. Under Renfrew's tactful guidance Kingdon "gets his man" and regains his stripe, while Matt demonstrates his commitment to socially-acceptable ethical standards. Both individuals demonstrate values-oriented decisions based on lessons they learn from observing the behavior of themselves and others around them, and both display moral and physical courage.

Erskine's habitual practice of including young men of ages 13 to 17 was not the result of a strategy intended to ensure an appeal to the youthful readers of "American Boy" magazine; rather, it was the direct result of his deep belief in the value of a natural kind of educational process, in which he hoped that the ideas and attitudes of his readers would be molded by their favorable response to the lessons his stories offered. But he was shrewd enough to know that if his readers ever thought for one second that they were reading an educational treatise, they would never read another of his stories. Erskine achieved successful lasting and successful results in the Renfrew series much in the fashion of his fictional hero: he gave his instruction in a subtle and entertaining manner.

(Note: I would like to thank librarian Nancy Ennis and other staff members of the Solebury School for the assistance they provided in the preparation of this paper.)

This paper was presented at the 1987 annual meeting of the Popular/American Culture Association, Montreal, Que., Canada.)

"FIRST" EDITIONS OF JUVENILE SERIES BOOKS

By Bob Chenu

One sometimes sees books described as First Editions which more properly should be called First Formats. In some of the books published by higher quality firms a First Edition may be identified or specifically described as such, but in the case of publishers of the cheaper editions which constitute the great bulk of juvenile books this isn't so. Grosset & Dunlap, Cupples & Leon, A. L. Burt, etc. did not make a differentiation.

When a series of books was in print for many years the publisher in some cases made changes in the format, and a particular copy may be readily identified as being of the first format that was used. In the Jerry Todd series this was the case, and there are greater or smaller changes made through which an individual copy can be classified. It is easy to note that the first format had plain end papers, a later format had a goldfish on the front cover and the end papers were illustrated, and the last format used had illustrated end papers but no goldfish on the front cover.

On the other hand, the Tom Swift series was in print for many years utilizing essentially the same format, which was a tan cloth with a stylized front cover. Though these are differences in the weave of the cloth, or in the shade of tan of it, they are basically small and will be noted only by specialized Tom Swift collectors who have studied these factors. The only change of an overtly obvious nature was the one to a plain orange-yellow cover which took place in 1932 almost at the end of the series popularity.

Hudson states in his bibliography (page XII) "There is no way of ascertaining that a book . . . is a First Edition."

It is possible to some extent to try to narrow the dating through a study of the dates of copyright of books advertised in the volume you are trying to check but this is very inexact. Some years ago Bob Johnson (Editor in Grief of the Tutter Bugle) and myself tried to pinpoint a copy of the "First" edition of Jerry Todd and the Whispering Mummy. Each of us came up with a copy which we thought might be such a copy, based on thus checking the books advertised in it. There were, however, some differences between the respective candidates, and thus a definitive answer was not reached.

It is thus apparent that a collector, or dealer, describing a book as a first edition does not mean to imply that such an exhaustive study has been made of the book. What is intended is to say that the book offered is in the first format used by the publisher. This is really all a collector to whom it is offered cares about in 999 cases out of 1000.

The longer that a series is in print the more changes in format have taken place. A good example of this is the long running Hardy Boys series or Nancy Drew series. Finally they have reached a point where there was not only a change in format but also a change in publisher. Along the way there were numerous changes in format from the one originally used. There was also a re-writing and revision of text, so that a copy printed after a certain date is not quite the same story that was first published under that title.

Some collectors don't care a rap what format a book is in, as they just want to obtain the title. Others are greatly specialized and seek a particular format (not necessarily the first) to fill out a gap in a collection they are building.

Format may also be important to a collector who wishes to have the series in uniform appearance. In such a case a decision must be made what format is decided when more than one was used on a series. In the Rover Boys ser-



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|--|---|
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| 3. Frank Merriwell's Foes 1902 | 18. Frank Merriwell's Reward 1900 |
| 4. Frank Merriwell's Trip West 1902 | 19. Frank Merriwell's Faith 1900 |
| 5. Frank Merriwell Down South . . . 1903 | 20. Frank Merriwell's Victories 1900 |
| 6. Frank Merriwell's Bravery 1903 | 21. Frank Merriwell's Power 1900 |
| 7. Frank Merriwell Races 1903 | 22. Frank Merriwell's Set-Back 1901 |
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The Greatest Triumph of All 1901 |
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| 13. Frank Merriwell's Skill 1903 | 28. Frank Merriwell's Lads or,
The Boys Who Got Another Chance 1911 |
| 14. Frank Merriwell's Champions . . . 1904 | |
| 15. Frank Merriwell's Return to Yale . 1904 | |

ARTHUR SHERMAN

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ies there were different formats used (and by different firms which published some titles). In my own case my decision was to collect a set of the books in the G&D edition bound in green with white lettering, for the first twenty titles, and in brown with red lettering for the last ten titles. This solved the problem of uniformity by ignoring the changes from Mershon to Stitt to Chat-terton Peck and then to the first G&D format in the original Rover Boys series, and the change from green to brown in the second set about the sons of the Rover Boys.

Other series may well have not undergone such changes and a uniform appearance is not a major problem. In some the only real change was a change of publisher, such as in the Frank V. Webster "series" where the change was from C&L as publisher to Saalfield. A Saalfield copy is just as satisfactory for purposes of reading as a C&L copy, but the book is of lesser quality insofar as paper used, etc. Here again a decision might be made between two copies based on condition, possession of a dust jacket, etc.

Since most collectors collect only a few series they will become familiar with variations in it, of format, publisher, etc. If such as this is important it is wise for the collector to specify when ordering a book just what is wanted, if the price involved is a substantial one. However bear in mind that such specifications may well result in the seller simply selling a book which would fully fit your wants to someone else. There is no desire to become involved in some hair splitting over a book which will be readily sold to someone less exacting. Also it is not unknown that the price moves upward to such a customer. Thus though the principle of "buyer beware" applies, ditto for the seller.

I would like to mention here that another method of determining editions just does not seem to work with these juvenile books. There exist in some books "points" which indicate what printing a copy is from. I have tried this on some Jerry Todd books, seeking typos in an early format, and checking later formats to see if the errors are corrected. I found that they were not. It thus appears that the same plates were used throughout all printings, presumably due to expense involved in making changes to the plates. Here again it was the publisher's desire to keep all costs to a minimum in books intended for children that were sold for fifty cents each, retail.

BOOK REVIEW BY LYDIA C. SCHURMAN, Professor, Humanities Division,
Northern Virginia Community College.

Edward T. LeBlanc's publication of *STREET AND SMITH DIME NOVEL BIBLIOGRAPHY PART I: BLACK AND WHITE ERA 1889-1897* is a milestone in dime novel bibliographical research. The work is the first in a six part series that Mr. LeBlanc will issue, a series which will eventually make available a complete listing of all Street and Smith dime novel and associated publications from 1889 through 1933.

Anyone who knows Mr. LeBlanc realizes these bibliographies—and many, many others still being completed—represent his life's work. He has been researching, writing, and perfecting them for the past forty years. His decision to begin publishing them will provide invaluable material to researchers and scholars interested in the dime novel field.

The first volume consists of 134 pages which give complete bibliographical information about Street and Smith's black and white dime novels. The entries begin with *LOG CABIN LIBRARY*, Street and Smith's first dime novel series in 1889 and are arranged chronologically through *NICK CARTER LIBRARY*, which ended in 1896. Other listings in the bibliography are: *Nugget*

Library, New York 5c Library and Diamond Dick Library.

Before each of the different series, Mr. LeBlanc gives its history as well as a statistical summary, which includes information on the number of issues, dates and schedule of publication, illustrations, and publisher's announcements. Each series has two listings: one in chronological order, which also gives reprint information; the other is alphabetically arranged by author and also includes pseudonyms.

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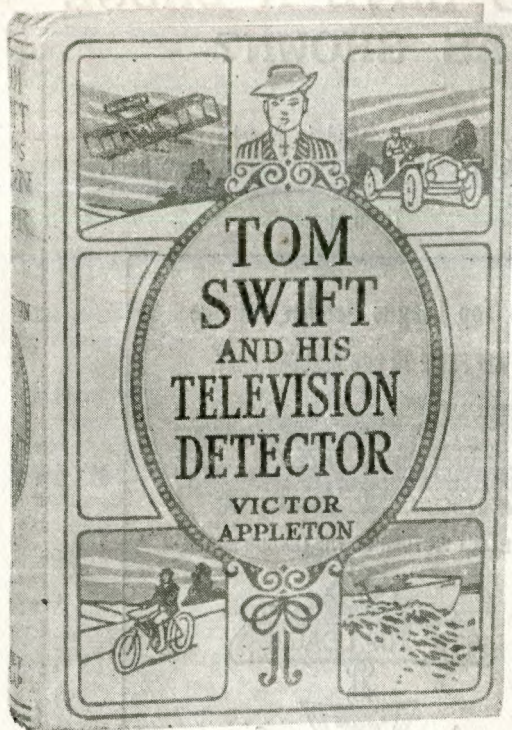


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